

Message Text

PAGE 01 STATE 209362

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

S E C R E T STATE 209362

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO BANGKOK, CANBERRA, DACCA,
ISLAMABAD, KJAKARTA, KULA LUMPUR, LONDON, MANILA, MOSCOW,
NEW DELHI, PHNOM PENH, ROME SAIGON, SINGAPORE, SEOUL, TAIPEI,
TOKYO, VIENTIANE, WELLINGTON, HONK KONG, PEKING, CINCPAC
FROM RANGOON.

QUOTE RANGOON 2472.

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, BM, CH

SUBJECT: PRC POLICY TOWARDS BURMA: SERIOUS IMPLICATIONS FOR SEA
NEIGHBORS

SUMMARY:

A. BURMESE ARMY IS NOW ENGAGED IN SOME OF HEAVIEST
FIGHTING IN ITS HISTORY AGAINST BURMA COMMUNIST PARTY
INSURGENTS WHO ARE UNDER CHINESE OPERATIONAL DIRECTION.
IN VIEW OF BURMA'S FIXED POLICY SINCE ESTABLISHMENT OF
PRC TO SEEK LATTER'S FRIENDSHIP AND ALLAY ITS SUSPICIONS,
PRC'S FLAGRANT ABUSE OF BURMESE SOVEREIGNTY THROUGH
INSTRUMENTALITY OF BCP IN SHAN STATE RAISES SERIOUS
QUESTION WHETHER IT IS POSSIBLE FOR SMALL ASIAN STATES
TO CO-EXIST PEACEFULLY WITH PRC SHORT OF COMPLETE
SUBSERVIENCE TO LATTER'S WILL.

B. I DISCUSSED SUBJECT THIS WEEK WITH FOUR OF MY
SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 209362

COLLEAGUES WHO HAVE EXCELLENT CONTACTS WITH PRC EMBASSY
HERE FROM WHICH THEY HAVE GOTTEN LINE THAT WHILE
GOVERNMENT RELATIONS BETWEEN RANGOON AND PEKING ARE GOOD
AND GPRC DOES NOT INTERFERE IN BURMESE AFFAIRS, BCP

ADMITTEDLY RECEIVES HELP FROM CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY. THIS IS JUSTIFIED ON GROUNDS THAT AS PARTY DEDICATED TO WORLD REVOLUTION CCP HAS DUTY TO COME TO AID OF FRATERNAL PARTY WHICH REQUESTS IT. BURMESE HAVE RECEIVED SAME EXPLANATION FROM THE CHINESE BUT ARE HARDLY REASSURED.

C. MY COLLEAGUES AGREE THAT BCP INSURGENCY REPRESENTS SERIOUS CHINESE POLITICAL AND MILITARY INTERFERENCE IN BURMESE AFFAIRS AND ARE MUCH CONCERNED AS TO WHAT THIS MEANS FOR BURMA AND SEA IN GENERAL. WHILE RECOGNIZING PRC LONG-TERM OBJECTIVE AS WORLD REVOLUTION, NONE OF THEM IS QUITE SURE OF PRC'S SHORT-TERM OBJECTIVES. THESE MAY RANGE FROM CONCERN FOR SAFETY OF ITS BORDERS (IN VIEW OF SOVIET ENCIRCLEMENT THREAT) TO EXERTION OF PRESSURE AGAINST GUB AND RTG. GUB MEANWHILE IS SERIOUSLY CONCERNED AT SITUATION BUT HAS REFRAINED FROM PUBLICIZING IT, PRESUMABLY ON BASIS THAT THIS WOULD MAKE IT MORE DIFFICULT FOR CHINA TO CHANGE ITS POLICIES.

D. CHINESE OBVIOUSLY HAVE CAPABILITY OF PROVIDING BCP WITH SUFFICIENT RECRUITS AND EQUIPMENT TO BLEED GUB FORCES TO DEATH IN LONG RUN. THUS GUB MAY BE FACED EVENTUALLY WITH PAINFUL ALTERNATIVES OF (A) SEEKING SUBSTANTIAL GRANTS OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT FROM ABROAD, (B) YIELDING SUBSTANTIAL TERRITORY TO BCP (E.G. ALL OF KENG TUNG) OR (C) REACHING COMPROMISE WITH BCP EVEN TO EXTENT OF COALITION GOVERNMENT WHICH COULD LEAD TO GUB'S SUBSERVIENCE TO PRC. END SUMMARY.

1. FOR PAST SEVERAL WEEKS BURMA ARMY HAS BEEN CONDUCTING THE LARGEST SINGLE MILITARY CAMPAIGN IN THE TWO YEARS I HAVE BEEN HERE. GUB HAS MUSTERED 5,000 TROOPS IN NORTHEAST KENG TUNG STATE AGAINST A FORCE OF 3,000 BURMESE COMMUNIST PARTY (BCP) INSURGENTS, WHO ARE REPORTEDLY BACKED BY 2,000 RESERVES. GUB
SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 209362

HAS HAD SOME INITIAL SUCCESSES, DECLARED GUB OBJECTIVE IS TO DRIVE BCP OUT OF KENG TUNG STATE WHERE IN PAST FEW MONTHS BCP INSURGENTS HAVE REPEATEDLY INTERDICTED TAUNG GYI/KENG TUNG ROAD, PRINCIPAL EAST-WEST ARTERY IN SOUTHEASTERN SHAN STATE. BCP ALREADY OCCUPIES VIRTUALLY ALL BURMESE TERRITORY NORTH OF KENG TUNG AND EAST OF SALWEEN. BURMESE MILITARY LEADERS ARE SAID TO REGARD CURRENT FIGHTING AS SOME OF THE MOST CRUCIAL SINCE BURMA'S INDEPENDENCE.

2. THIS MAJOR MILITARY EFFORT HAS SIGNIFICANCE BEYOND BURMA'S BORDERS. EVIDENCE WE HAVE ACCUMULATED DURING PAST TWO YEARS IS NOW OVERWHELMING THAT BCP IN SHAN

STATE IS COMPLETELY A CREATURE OF CHINA, I.E. IT IS UNDER OPERATIONAL CONTROL OF CHINESE MILITARY HEADQUARTERS IN YUNAN, SUPPLIED AND EQUIPPED FROM CHINA, LARGELY RECRUITED AND TRAINED IN CHINA, AND ENCADRED WITH CHINESE TECHNICIANS AND SPECIALIST.

3. WHAT MAKES THIS SITUATION ESPECIALLY REMARKABLE IS FACT THAT OF ALL CHINA'S NON-COMMUNIST NEIGHBORS NONE HAS BETTER RECORD OF EXTENDING HAND OF FRIENDSHIP TO PEKING THAN DOES BURMA. IT HAS BEEN FIXED POLICY OF BURMA SINCE ESTABLISHMENT OF PRC TO SEEK FRIENDSHIP WITH PEKING. BURMA HAS FROM THE FIRST SCRUPULOUSLY ADHERED TO A NON-ALIGNED POLICY. ESPECIALLY IN THE PAST TWO OR THREE YEARS, BURMA HAS CONSPICUOUSLY AVOIDED CLOSE RELATIONS WITH EITHER THE SOVIET UNION OR THE US IN AN EFFORT NOT TO AROUSE CHINA'S SUSPICIONS. IN VIEW OF GUB'S RECORD, PRC'S FLAGRANT ABUSE OF BURMA'S TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY AND SOVEREIGNTY THROUGH INSTRUMENTALITY OF BCP INSURGENCY IN SHAN STATE RAISES SERIOUS QUESTION AS TO WHETHER IT IS POSSIBLE FOR SMALL ASIAN STATES TO CO-EXIST PEACEFULLY WITH PRC SHORT OF COMPLETE SUBSERVIENCE TO PEKING'S WILL.

4. DURING THE PAST FEW DAYS I HAVE DISCUSSED SINO/BURMESE RELATIONS WITH JAPANESE, PAKISTANI, BRITISH AND ITALIAN AMBASSADORS WHO HAVE ENJOYED EXCELLENT CONTACTS WITH PRC EMBASSY HERE. ALL FOUR HAD DISCUSSED THE SUBJECT OF SINO/BURMESE RELATIONS WITH THE PREVIOUS SECRET

PAGE 04 STATE 209362

PRC AMBASSADOR CHEN CHAO-YUAN, INCLUDING MATTER OF CHINESE AID TO BCP. (THE NEW CHINESE AMBASSADOR, YEH CHENG-CHURG, HAS PROVED THUS FAR TO BE MUCH LESS APPROACHABLE THAN CHEN). ALL FOUR OF MY COLLEAGUES AGREED THAT SHAN STATE BCP INSURGENCY REPRESENTED SERIOUS CHINESE POLITICAL AND MILITARY INTERFERENCE IN BURMESE AFFAIRS AND ALL WERE MUCH CONCERNED AS TO WHAT THIS MEANS FOR BURMA AND FOR SOUTHEAST ASIA IN GENERAL.

5. ALL FOUR HAD GOTTEN SAME LINE FROM AMBASSADOR CHEN: THAT GOVERNMENT RELATIONS BETWEEN RANGOON AND PEKING WERE GOOD AND THAT CHINESE DID NOT INTERFERE IN BURMESE AFFAIRS; BUT ADMITTEDLY BCP RECEIVED HELP FROM THE CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY (CCP) WHICH AS A PARTY DEDICATED TO WORLD REVOLUTION HAD A DUTY TO COME TO THE AID OF A FRATERNAL PARTY WHICH REQUESTED SUPPORT.

6. THE BURMESE THEMSELVES HAVE, OF COURSE, GOTTEN THE SAME EXPLANATION FROM THE CHINESE, I.E. THAT ANY HELP RECEIVED BY THE BCP FROM CHINA WAS STRICTLY A PARTY AFFAIR. BUT THE BURMESE CAN HARDLY BE REASSURED BY

BEING TOLD IN EFFECT THAT THEIR TROOPS ARE BEING KILLED
BY CCP NOT CHINESE GOVERNMENT BULLETS.

7. WHILE MY FOUR COLLEAGUES AGREED THAT THE BCP
INSURGENTS ARE INSTRUMENTS OF CHINESE POLICY, NONE WAS
QUITE SURE OF THE OBJECTIVES OF THIS POLICY. ON THE
ADMISSION OF THE CHINESE AMBASSADOR HIMSELF, WORLD
REVOLUTION IS ONE OF THE OBJECTIVES BUT ALL AGREED THAT
THIS IS LONG-TERM, AND THERE MUST BE SHORT-TERM CHINESE
OBJECTIVES WHICH DO NOT INCLUDE THE EARLY OVERTHROW
OF THE GUB.

8. THE PAKISTAN AMBASSADOR GAVE CONSIDERABLE WEIGHT
TO CHINESE FEAR OF SOVIET ENCIRCLEMENT OF BURMA. THE
CHINESE SUSPECT THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE HEAVILY INFILTRATED
THE BURMA SOCIALIST PROGRAM PARTY (BSPP), BURMA'S
ONLY LEGAL PARTY, WHICH WILL PRESUMABLY ACHIEVE ENHANCED
POWER FOLLOWING PROMULGATION OF THE NEW CONSTITUTION
AND FORMATION OF THE NEW CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT EARLY
SECRET

PAGE 05 STATE 209362

NEXT YEAR. THUS SOVIET INFLUENCE IN RANGOON WILL BE
ENHANCED AT CHINA'S EXPENSE, ACCORDING TO THIS THEORY.

9. THE BRITISH AMBASSADOR EMPHASIZED THAT PEKING PROBABLY
HAD A MULTIPLICITY OF OBJECTIVES IN BURMA. HE
GAVE CREDENCE TO THAI FEARS THAT CHINA WAS PUSHING
TOWARDS THE THAI BORDER THROUGH THE BCP. ANOTHER
OBJECTIVE MIGHT BE THE CREATION OF A BUFFER ZONE ALONG
CHINA'S BORDERS; ANOTHER MIGHT BE TO KEEP PRESSURE ON
THE GUB TO INSURE THAT IT DOES NOT PURSUE POLICIES
INIMICAL TO PEKING'S INTERESTS.

10. THE BRITISH AMBASSADOR'S RECOLLECTION OF HIS
CONVERSATIONS WITH PRC AMBASSADOR CHEN COULD PROVIDE A
SIGNIFICANT CLUE TO CHINESE OBJECTIVES. CHEN
REPORTEDLY REMARKED THAT IF THE GUB WOULD TRY TO MAKE
FRIENDS WITH BCP RATHER THAN FIGHT IT THE FRATERNAL
CCP THEN WOULD, OF COURSE, NOT NEED TO COME TO BCP'S
AID. THIS REMARK COULD IMPLY A PRC OBJECTIVE OF
PRESSUING
GUB INTO A COALITION WITH THE BCP. (PRC-
BASED CLANDESTINE RADIO, "VOICE OF THE PEOPLE OF BURMA,"
ON OCTOBER 18 CARRIED LENGTHY REPORT ON SITUATION IN
"LIBERATED" NORTHERN WA STATE, CLAIMING THAT "PEOPLE'S
POWER" HAS BEEN SET UP IN OVER 800 OF 1,000 VILLAGES WITH
TOTAL POPULATION OF 170,000).

11. WHILE ALL FOUR AMBASSADORS FELT THAT CHINA-
DIRECTED BCP INSURGENCY RAISED SERIOUS QUESTIONS AS
TO PRC'S FUTURE RELATIONS WITH SEA COUNTRIES, TWO LAID
PARTICULAR STRESS ON THIS ASPECT. THE JAPANESE

AMBASSADOR TOLD ME THAT HIS COLLEAGUES AT LAST MONTH'S JAPANESE MISSION CHIEFS CONFERENCE IN TOKYO BELIEVED OTHER SEA GOVERNMENTS WERE AWARE OF PRC'S SUPPORT OF BCP INSURGENTS DESPITE BURMA'S POLICY OF NEUTRALITY AND FRIENDSHIP FOR PRC AND THIS RAISED THEIR SUSPICIONS TOWARD PEKING (SEPTTEL).

12. THE ITALIAN AMBASSADOR CLAIMED HE MADE PRECISELY THIS POINT IN A RECENT CONVERSATION WITH THE NEW CHINESE AMBASSADOR YEH, STRESSING THAT CHINA'S SUPPORT
SECRET

PAGE 06 STATE 209362

OF BCP INSURGENTS WAS UNDERMINING CREDIBILITY OF PEKING'S PROFESSED PEACEFUL INTENTIONS TOWARDS SEA NATIONS.

13. DESPITE PRICE GUB IS PAYING IN EFFORTS TO THROW BACK BCP INSURGENCIES, GUB HAS CONSISTENTLY REFRAINED FROM PUBLICIZING THIS INDIRECT CHINESE AGGRESSION AGAINST BURMA. GUB PRESUMABLY FEELS THAT NOTHING TANGIBLE WOULD BE GAINED FROM PUBLICIZING CURRENT STATE OF AFFAIRS IN EASTERN SHAN STATE, WHILE PUBLICITY MIGHT MAKE IT MORE DIFFICULT FOR CHINA TO CHANGE ITS POLICIES. GUB SPOKESMEN CONFRONTED WITH QUESTIONS ABOUT CHINESE SUPPORT OF BCP INSURGENTS E.G. BY SUCH AMERICAN CORRESPONDENTS AS BOB SHAPLAN OF NEW YORKER AND BERNARD WEINRAUB OF NEW YORK TIMES, EITHER DENY FACT OF CHINESE SUPPORT OR CLAIM IT IS SIGNIFICANTLY DIMINISHING. HOWEVER, SIZE AND SCOPE OF CURRENT BURMESE MILITARY OPERATIONS AGAINST BCP BELIEVE ASSESSMENT THAT CHINESE SUPPORT IS DIMINISHING.

14. DESPITE FACT GUB FACES SERIOUS DEPLETION OF EQUIPMENT WHICH IT CANNOT AFFORD TO REPLACE THERE IS NO SIGN OF GUB WILLINGNESS TO SEEK COMPROMISE WITH BCP. WHEN JAPANESE AMBASSADOR QUERIED FOREIGN OFFICE POLITICAL DIRECTOR THONG HTAIK RECENTLY ABOUT RUMOR THAT CHINESE AMBASSADOR YEH WAS TRYING TO MEDIATE BETWEEN BCP AND GUB, THONG HTAIK NOT ONLY DISMISSED REPORT AS BASELESS, BUT SAID GUB DEMANDED SURRENDER OF BCP INSURGENTS AND PRC AMBASSADOR SHOULD TELL PEKING TO STOP AIDING BCP. HOWEVER, PRC WOULD SEEM TO HAVE CAPABILITY IN LONG TERM OF PROVIDING BCP WITH ENOUGH RECRUITS AND EQUIPMENT TO BLEED GUB FORCES TO DEATH. IN ABSENCE OF A CHANGE IN PRC POLICY GUB WILL EVENTUALLY BE FORCED EITHER TO SEEK SUBSTANTIAL GRANTS OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT FROM ABROAD OR YIELD SUBSTANTIAL GROUND TO BCP, E.G. ALL OF KENG TUNG, OR DO BOTH. IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE THAT THE GUB WILL BE FORCED INTO A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT GIVING THE BCP A SHARE OF POWER IN GUB AND PROVIDING PEKING WITH POWERFUL LEVERAGE ON GUB POLICY.
MARTIN
UNQUOTE KISSINGER

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